

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of offering admission to a venue, the method comprising the steps of:

providing programmable media, the media representing admission to the venue;

assigning an identifying number to each programmable media;

offering said media representing admission to the venue for sale at a retail location;

registering the identifying number on said programmable media with an admission database upon receipt of proper payment; and

allowing admission to the venue upon presentation of the media.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the location is a retail store.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the location is a vending machine.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the location is a tour operator.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the venue is a theme park.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the venue is a theater.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the programmable media is a card with a magnetic stripe.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the programmable media is a card with a barcode.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the programmable media is a card with printed information.

10. A method of allowing admission to a venue comprising the steps of:

providing a programmable media at a location remote from the venue;
assigning computer programmable readable characters to each of said programmable media;

relating the value of admission to one or more programs offered at said venue to said characters to provide authorized admission to said one or more programs at said venue when said programmable media is activated;

registering said characters on said programmable media with a database capable of reading said characters when activated at said location remote from said venue upon proper presentation of authorization by a user; and

allowing admission into said venue with said programmable media upon reading the characters on said programmable media at said venue.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein said location is a retail store.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein said location is a vending machine.
13. The method of claim 10 wherein said location is a tour operator.
14. The method of claim 10 wherein said venue is a theme park.
15. The method of claim 10 wherein said venue is a theater.
16. The method of claim 10 wherein said venue is a stadium.
17. The method of claim 10 wherein said venue is a ticketed event.
18. The method of claim 10 wherein said venue is a convention.
19. The method of claim 10 wherein the value of admission to said venue is zero dollars.
20. The method of claim 10 wherein said programmable media includes a card with a magnetic stripe readable by a magnetic stripe card reader.

21. The method of claim 10 wherein said programmable media includes a card with a barcode readable by a barcode reader.

22. The method of claim 10 wherein said programmable media includes a card having said readable characters imprinted thereon.

23. The method of claim 10 wherein said programmable media includes a card having been programmed by electromagnetic frequencies readable by a receiver when transmitted thereto.

24. A method of allowing prepaid admission to a venue comprising the steps of:

- providing a programmable media at a location remote from the venue;
- assigning computer program readable characters to each of said programmable media;

- relating the cost of one or more programs offered at said venue to said characters to provide prepaid admission to said one or more programs at said venue when said programmable media is activated;

- registering said characters on said programmable media with a database capable of reading said characters when activated at said location remote from said venue, upon proper payment by the user for the same; and

- allowing prepaid admission at said venue with said programmable media upon reading the characters on said programmable media at said venue.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein the step of relating the cost of one or more programs offered at said venue to said characters includes the step of

directly programming said cost into said programmable media which cost is adjustable.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the step of adjusting said cost is carried out by information stored in said database.

27. The method of claim 24 wherein said venue is a theme park offering multiday visits, and the steps of relating the cost of one or more programs offered at said venue includes the step of relating the cost of each day of visit to said park to said characters.

28. The method of claim 27 including the step of adjusting the cost represented by said characters each day said programmable media is activated at said park.

29. The method of claim 24 including the step of recording the value of said programmable media on said database.

30. The method of claim 29 wherein the step of recording the value includes the step of recording any or all of said total monetary value, and number of prepaid days of admission to said venue.

31. The method of claim 24 including the step of providing indicia on said programmable media indicating the venue to which the programmable media relates and the value of said programmable media.

32. The method of claim 31 wherein said programmable media includes a card.

33. The method of claim 24 wherein said programmable media has no monetary value and cannot provide admission to said venue until activation of the same.

34. The method of claim 24 wherein the sales price and payment of entitlement of admission to said venue is zero dollars.

35. The method of claim 33 wherein said programmable media is a card displayed prominently at a location remote the venue.

36. A system for offering dynamic advance purchase admission to a venue, the system comprising:

- programmable media disposed displayed at a location remote from said venue representing at least one admission to the venue when activated;

- activation means at said location adapted to activate said programmable media;

- a database for registering the identity of the programmable media as a valid admission after activation thereof; and

- a device for reading the identity of the programmable media after activation, and checking said database to see if it is a valid admission recorded in said database, and allowing admission to said venue.

37. The system of claim 36 wherein the programmable media includes the sales price and amount of payment entitling admission to said venue.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein said sales price and payment of said entitlement is zero dollars.

39. A method of offering admission to a venue, the method comprising the steps of:

providing programmable media on a display at a sale location remote from the venue, the media representing admission to the venue;

assigning identifying means to each programmable media;

offering said media representing admission to the venue for sale at a retail location;

registering the identifying means on said programmable media with an admission database upon receipt of proper payment at the sales location; and
allowing admission to the venue upon presentation of the media.

40. A method of prohibiting the sale and activation of programmable media comprising the steps of:

assigning computer programmable readable characters to said media and in a database defining a unique physical item type identified by its combination of text, colors, graphics, size, shape and programmable objects;

programming combinatorial rules in an activation system, a sales system, or both, indicating permitted item types that can be paired with each entitlement or value that can be purchased and activated;

testing the combinatorial rules at time of purchase in the sales system and/or activation in the activation system; and

permitting or denying the sale and activation based on the test results.

41. The method of claim 40 where the combinatorial rules are tested in a retail Point of Sales system.

42. The method of claim 40 where the combinatorial rules are tested in a system that manages the activation of admission entitlement or value.

43. The method of claim 40 where the combinatorial rules use binary arithmetic on the item type identifier and a number associated with the desired entitlement to determine the outcome.

44. The method of claim X where the combinatorial rules use a database of records that specify combinations of item type identifiers and entitlement identifiers to determine the outcome.